

Updated 01/29/21

Dear Members of the Austen Riggs Community:

I am following up on my January 21 message to let you know that the two patients and one staff member who tested positive in our COVID screening program and entered isolation have been medically cleared to resume their normal activities. Additionally, the 11 people who went into quarantine after contact tracing determined they had potentially close contact with the three, have also been approved to return to their normal routines. None of the patients or staff members had any symptoms or any known exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. Subsequent routine testing of our population yielded no positive results and there is no evidence of COVID-19 spreading within the Center.

We are very thankful for both this outcome and for the continued vigilance of our community. Participation by all patients and staff in our twice-weekly screening program, in conjunction with observing social distancing and mask wearing, have proven to be highly successful at limiting the virus' ability to enter our environment. Likewise, our quick-response isolation/quarantine/contact tracing protocols are critical to containing any possible spread.

In just a few weeks, under the distribution plan authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the majority of Riggs patients and staff will receive the second dose of Moderna vaccine, which will bring an even higher level of protection to the Center. In line with government health advisories, we will maintain our COVID detection and prevention protocols after receiving the vaccine. However, once the majority of patients and staff have been vaccinated, I believe the Center will be in the most secure position it has experienced since the pandemic started.

As new updates become available, I will share them with you via this webpage.

Stay safe,

Eric M. Plakun, MD
Medical Director/CEO